AMENDMENTS

Please enter the following amendments:

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(previously presented)** A composition for inhibiting specific gene expression with reduced side effects, the composition comprising a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide that is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene for which inhibition of expression is desired, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein the modified CpG is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG.

2. **(canceled)**

3. **(currently amended)** A method for providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide with reduced splenomegaly and reduced depletion of platelets to a mammal ~~modulating gene expression in a mammal with reduced side effects~~ comprising administering to the mammal a composition according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is being expressed in the mammal.

4. **(currently amended)** A method for providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide ~~therapeutically treating~~, with reduced side effects, to an individual with a disease caused by aberrant gene expression, the method comprising administering to an individual having the disease a composition according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is aberrantly expressed, wherein such aberrant expression causes the disease.

5. **(previously presented)** A method for reducing side effects of a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide administered to a mammal, comprising:

(a) providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide having a CpG modification selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, inverted CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG; and

(b) administering the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide to the mammal, wherein administration of the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide results in fewer side effects than the administration of an unmodified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide.

6. (**new**) The method of claim 3, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a viral gene.

7. (**new**) The method of claim 6, wherein the viral gene is from a virus selected from the group consisting of human immunodeficiency virus, influenza virus, herpes simplex virus, Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, respiratory syncytial virus, influenza virus, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and papilloma virus.

8. (**new**) The method of claim 3, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a prokaryotic or a eukaryotic pathogen gene.

9. (**new**) The method of claim 8, wherein the prokaryotic or eukaryotic pathogen is selected from the group consisting of *Plasmodium falciparum*, *Plasmodium malarie*, *Plasmodium ovale*, *Schistosoma spp.*, and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

10. (**new**) The method of claim 3, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a host cellular gene.

11. (**new**) The method of claim 10, wherein the host cellular gene is inappropriately expressed such that disease results.

12. (**new**) The method of claim 10, wherein the host cellular gene is selected from the group consisting of vascular endothelial growth factor, beta amyloid, DNA

methyltransferase, protein kinase A, ApoE4 protein, p-glycoprotein, c-MYC protein, BCL-2 protein and CAPL.

13. (**new**) The method of claim 4, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a host cellular gene.

14. (**new**) The method of claim 13, wherein the host cellular gene is inappropriately expressed such that disease results.

15. (**new**) The method of claim 13, wherein the host cellular gene is selected from the group consisting of vascular endothelial growth factor, beta amyloid, DNA methyltransferase, protein kinase A, ApoE4 protein, p-glycoprotein, c-MYC protein, BCL-2 protein and CAPL.